

BUBBLE-HEAD GETS A TASTE OF THE FIGHTING SEABEE LIFE

By CM3 (SCW) Greg Heidler, NMCB ONE Alfa Co.

After serving as a submariner for a year and a half, Fireman (FN)(SS) Randy Eck wants to become a Construction Mechanic (CM) with the Seabees. FN Eck, from Driggs, Idaho, enlisted in the United States Navy in 2001. After boot camp, he was sent to basic sub school, and received orders to the Fast Attack Submarine, USS City of Corpus Christi (SSN 705).

When Naval Mobile Construction Battalion ONE's Alfa Company heard about Eck's plan to cross rate, the Alfa Dawgs invited him to try two weeks of Seabee life. During his two-week stay, FN Eck had to answer one question several times, "Why do you want to give up all that sub pay?" FN Eck's response to that was always, "money does not matter if you don't enjoy what you do. Besides, I've been waiting to do this for a long time. Seabees are always working hard, or doing physical training (PT), and never give up. Lastly, CM'S get to work on heavy construction equipment, which is something I always wanted to do."

Eck was assigned to the "Heavy Shop" to begin his Seabee experience. In this shop, all the heavy equipment is maintained or repaired. This is typically some of the toughest work for a Construction Mechanic. Eck's supervisor, CM2 Chris Melio immediately put him to work. FN Eck worked from 0600-2100 for a week in the heavy shop. His second week was spent in the light shop with CM2 Gus Ramirez as his supervisor. CM2 Ramirez thought FN Eck is a highly motivated, hard charger who kept asking for more work and stated, "He will make a fine Seabee."

FN Eck stayed in a Seabee barracks, ate in a Seabee galley, and participated in Seabee physical training. He enjoyed the barracks, and galley, but on Wednesdays, “Gunny P.T.” (Physical training led by the Battalion Military Advisor, Gunnery Sergeant Mitchell Green, USMC) was as he said it, “a little rough.” FN Eck stated that they never perform so many different workouts of that intensity on the sub.

On his last day, FN Eck invited EO3 Patterson and CM3 Heidler to visit his boat, USS City of Corpus Christi (SSN 705). He wanted some Seabees to experience his lifestyle in a similar way to how he had experienced theirs. CM3 Heidler said of his trip, “I learned some new facts about subs, and how submariners live for example, I always thought that a submarine was one long single deck tube. They actually have three decks.” The SEABEES also saw their galley, control room, head, berthing, and torpedo room (a favorite). When they entered one of the berthing spaces, and saw how cramped life is onboard, EO3 Patterson said, “Nope, I couldn't do it.” It put into perspective the extent of differences in the Naval Service, from submariners who work hundreds of feet below the sea to the Seabees who rarely, if ever, embark aboard US Navy Warships. FN (SS) Eck looks forward to joining the ranks of the Fighting Seabees and now he knows just what to expect.